

A
REPLY
TO
SOME PARTS
OF
The Bishop of Landaff's Address
TO THE
PEOPLE OF GREAT BRITAIN.

By GILBERT WAKEFIELD, B. A.
Late Fellow of Jesus-College, Cambridge.

The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is exceeding great ;
and the land is full of blood, and the city full of perverseness.

EZEKIEL, ix. 9.

Venit summa dies et ineluctabile tempus
Dardanæ. Fuimus Troes ; fuit Ilium, et ingens
Gloria Teucrorum : ferus omnia Jupiter Argos
Transfudit. —————

VIRGIL.



A
R E P L Y, &c.

THE author of this Address is a Prelate of high and deserved reputation; a Prelate, eminently distinguished among his contemporary academics*, for acquired endowments and native vigour of understanding, nor less conspicuous as a theologian and philosopher among his countrymen at large. It is neither my practice, nor my propensity, to think or to speak of such men, but with the language of deference and the sentiments of veneration. I must be excused however, from the paramount and antecedent reverence which I owe to TRUTH and PATRIOTISM, if I feel myself compelled to declare an absolute dissatisfaction with the *political opinions* of this writer, and if I venture to suggest at the same time a presumption of juster conceptions on these points from a mediocrity of talents in *my* situation, than from the most pre-eminent abilities in *his*.† Our minds are inevitably and imperceptibly influenced by the contact of surrounding circumstances; and our convictions and our reasonings can no more escape the associations consequent on external station, than our bodily constitutions can refuse to sympathize with the climate and the atmosphere under which we live. By an essential alteration in the present system of our go-

* Εκατὶ στεφανῶν θα-
πτον ἐν ἀλιξίῳ.

PIND.

† Rarus enim ferme sensus communis in illa
Fortuna. Juvenal; viii. 73.

Where by *sensus communis* I understand that sort of *equal sympathy* which can only result from unawed and unobstructed communications with the *profanum vulgus*, or *swinish multitude*: an advantage utterly incompatible with dignified stations. Compare Quintilian, lib. i. cap. 2. p. 30. ed. Burm.

vernment,

vernment, if the result of foreign invasion or intestine anarchy, the Bishop of Landaff would lose immediately all his *ecclesiastical* offices at least; whose emoluments, if not *exorbitant*, appear very considerable in the estimation of one, who would think all his exertion in the cause of literature amply remunerated by a *fifth* part of their annual production. He would lose also the prospect of advancement in the Church; a prospect, in his case, unavoidably brilliant and conspicuous, for reasons very honourable to himself; because no man has a better title to a higher see, from his abilities, nor (in my judgement) is there a single Prelate on the bench, who would adorn the most elevated preferment more. The same effects would, I think, eventually take place, (this may be censured as an imprudent intimation, but truth and integrity will enter into no composition with a temporising policy) the same effects, I say, would finally result, though by a secure and tranquil process, from a radical reformation in the representative part of our constitution. Can we then rationally expect, that the pensionaries of Church and State should view, with a suitable discrimination and a clear disinterestedness, the imperfections of our establishment, or profess themselves friendly to measures, which may remove that foundation on which they stand? Certainly, a system with all its corruptions* must necessarily appear more eligible to men so situated, than the dangerous alternative of reformation; which may be well compared to the growing phantom of the poet:—

Pama, malum quo non aliud velocius ullum,
Mobilitate viger, viresque acquirit eundo;
Pama metu primo, mox sese attollit in auras,
Ingrediturque solo, et caput inter nubila condit.

But † what are the hopes and fears of an humble citizen,

* ——— veterem cum tota ærugine sollem. Juv.

† In the mean time, I must remark in passing, the total subversion of our ecclesiastical and civil polity, as a natural and certain operation of the present administration, is so obvious as to appear incapable of escaping the most heedless observer; and that by a horrible and sudden defoliation; whereas the changes of reformation would be no precipitation

citizen, like myself, in the present crisis? On the one hand, with a continuance of our most *happy* constitution in Church and state, our portion is, the sure abhorrence of all good churchmen, amidst an unwearied assertion of christianity in our writings and our life; persecution, and probably imprisonment, or even military execution in no long time hence, if we presume to assert the unalienable privilege of independent man in an open declaration of our sentiments; or, at best, an absolute insulation, through legal tyranny or popular opprobrium, from the reasonable benefits of society: in short, letters and philosophy, with neglect and poverty, must be our lot. On the other hand, from a subversion of the government by foreign or domestic violence, our portion would be, A fearful expectation of those tremendous evils, which appear to no man more formidable, than to the sequestered student, whose *dear delight* is peace; which appear to no man more formidable, than to the genuine professor of the gospel, who contemplates an instigator of war, with his associates and abettors, as an incarnate Satan in the pandæmonium of infernal spirits. Which then, of the two is more likely to pronounce a right judgment on the present posture of affairs? He, who has much to dread with but distant and precarious hopes from a change of system; or he, whose emoluments as an ecclesiastic, and consequence as a privileged man, are inseparably blended with the present administration of this country? Certainly, the proposed question may exhibit itself to one, as a neutral position of *general utility* and *public happiness*; but can hardly fail to be blended by the other with an adulterated infusion of *personal accommodation* and *present interest*: not because the individual is defective, but because motives must operate, and Nature is immutable.

After these premises, I proceed to discuss some lead-

tion from an eminence, but an easy and gradual descent to a proper level. Why this insanity then of persevering in a support of the present measures?

Why, but to sink beneath Misfortune's blow,
With louder ruin, to the gulphs below.

ing principles of the Address before me; and if, in conformity to the imperious dictates of unsophisticated Reason and the undisguised frankness of my own temper, I should appear to shew more respect to intrinsic preponderancies than to distinctions merely accidental, and should sink the *prelate* in the *politician*; let no reader mistake honest zeal for petulant intemperance, or suppose me capable for a moment of any feelings but those of pure benevolence and high esteem for my illustrious opponent. The times are critical beyond all example of former ages. The social fabrics of other days are either shaking from their foundations, or crumbling into dust. The public ear must endure to vibrate with an incessant application of *sound*, but momentous, *doctrine*. Lenitives have been long tried in vain: *the wound refuseth to be healed*. Bring forth the caustic and the knife; or the man is lost for ever.

————— & προς ιατρον σαρξ
Θρονη πτωχας προς τομωντι πηματα.

“ My Fellow Countrymen,

“ THE sentiments which I shall, in this address, take the liberty of stating to you on some interesting points, will, I hope, meet with your candid attention; if not from their worth, from the consideration that they are the sentiments of an independent man.” P. 1.

Undoubtedly, if the contest be presumed to subsist between one ministry and another, the Bishop of Landaff may be deemed as much as any man similarly situated, *an independent man*. But in a more extended view of this appellation, and agreeably to some remarks already advanced in the preceding pages, this independence cannot be so easily conceded to him. For in fact, very fortunately for the cause of liberty and human happiness, the competition is no longer partial and unimportant, between *two parties* in and out of place, but is become a contest of *principles*, of a general and most interesting kind, between **CORRUPTION** and **REFORMATION**. The present ministry, therefore,

fore, and the abuses in Church and State, are indivisibly interwoven with each other; and every man alive, who profits by these enormous inequalities, can by no means be esteemed *independent*, but must be considered in the eye of reason as an *interested supporter* of our existing forms: forms which I, with many others, regard as utterly inconsistent with the true welfare of the community. A main argument for the veracity of the first Christian preachers is constructed on the opposition of their conduct to their worldly interest. Is the evidence of an ecclesiastical dignitary in our church stamped with the same mark of authenticity in it's favour?

" A new system of finance has this year been introduced; and I fairly own it has my approbation as far as it goes." P. 2.

Abstractedly considered, it is a just and wise measure to raise within the year the expences of that year; and, if this equitable plan had always been found necessary, so many horrible wars would not have been carried on, nor would posterity have groaned under the criminal oppressions of their sanguinary ancestors. But this measure was not adopted by Mr. Pitt, either for it's wisdom, or it's justice; but because the funding scheme can be pursued no longer, from an absolute inability to raise the supplies of the year by any tax, that can be imposed on an impoverished and discontented people. In truth, ministers begin to feel, that our expenditure is that mill-stone, which will infallibly sink them and their system together in perdition: and it is very doubtful, whether their profligacy and insanity have left political salvation practicable to all the united wisdom and virtue of the country.

" I lament, as every man must do, the necessity of imposing so heavy a burthen on the community; and with a family of eight children, I shall feel its pressure as much as most men: but I am so far from censuring the minister for having done so much, that I sincerely wish he had done a great deal more. In the present situation of Great Britain, and of Europe, palliatives are of no use, half-measures cannot save

“ us. Instead of calling for a tenth of a man’s income,
 “ I wish the minister had called for a tenth or for such
 “ other portion of every man’s whole property, as
 “ would have enabled him not merely to make a tem-
 “ porary provision for the war, but to have paid off,
 “ in a few years, the whole or the greatest part of the
 “ national debt.” P. 2.

A strange statement indeed, from a man of so much good sense and sagacity !

Ω Κυκλωψ, Κυκλωψ, πα τας φρενας εκπεπατασαι ;

Let me expose the fallacy of this reasoning by a very prompt intelligible instance; which will apply also much more cogently in the case of *property*, than of *income*.

The bishop of Landaff and myself have been brought up, though at different periods, in the same place and the same discipline: our early studies, our views, our habits, and our connections, were much alike. I profess myself to feel as sensible a relish for the real comforts and conveniencies of life, as he can feel. Suppose now, *my* income to be £200, and *his* £2000. I with my *six* children can furnish ourselves with no more than the actual necessities of food, raiment, and habitation, with our resources. Take from me a tenth part of this income, and you distress me beyond description: exact from him in the same proportion, and you abridge nothing but extravagant superfluity or immoderate accumulation. He has his remedy in retrenchment without the loss of a single comfort. The case would admit of a much more impressive statement to the disadvantage of the Bishop’s argument, if I had not said enough already to evince its extreme erroneousness to the most superficial understanding.

“ When all the members of a community are
 “ proportionably reduced, the relation between the
 “ individuals, as to the *quantum* of each man’s prop-
 “ erty, remaining unaltered, the individuals themselves
 “ will feel no elevation or depression in the scale of
 “ society. When all the foundations of a great build-
 “ ing sink uniformly, the symmetry of the parts is not
 “ injured ;

"injured; the pressure on each member remains as it was; no rupture is made: the building will not be so lofty, but it may stand on a better bottom."

PP. 3—4.

The comparison is elegant and ingenious, but not apposite to the Bishop's inference in some *trivial* particulars. For alas! the *ground-floor* of this grand and stable edifice, where myself and my mess-mates of the *swinish* multitude, were regaling ourselves, as well as *existing circumstances* would possibly admit, on our *cheese-parings* and *candles' ends*; our ground-floor, I say, is sunk for ever in damp and darkness; only to make, forsooth! a more firm foundation for our aristocratical and prelatical superiors, who are frisking and feasting in the upper-rooms with unalloyed glee and their customary unconcern. And this, I apprehend, is precisely the case with these exorbitant Jacobinical requisitions of the minister. Whilst the higher orders feel no inconvenience from the pressure, those, who live by the expenditure of society and their own personal exertions, are ground to powder.

"I have lately conversed with a variety of men, in different stations, and in different parts of the kingdom, and have scarcely met with one among the landed gentry, and with none among the manufacturers, tradesmen, farmers, and artificers of the country, who has not declared that he had much rather pay his portion of the principal of the national debt, than be harrassed with the taxes destined for the payment of the interest of it."

P. 6.

Indeed! Why, the generality of people, specified in this description, have no such portion in their power: no hoard, no secret stock, to draw from. Their income is successive, and precarious. We can contrive, but with difficulty, peradventure, to furnish a guinea for each month; but if you come upon us for *twelve* guineas, in a mass, we have them not. But, if this be true of *income*, how much more of *property*?

I protest

I protest solemnly, when I observe what seems to me such absolute ignorance of the state of society in this country, and such outrageous defiance of the most notorious facts, I begin to doubt whether my ideas be not absolutely bewildered, and my intellect essentially disordered in it's functions; especially, when I consider the character of the writer: I console myself, however, under a consciousness of honest purpose, and a readiness to retract any error, into which I may have fallen, with grateful acknowledgment to my corrector.

"Whatever doubts I formerly entertained, or
 "(notwithstanding all I have read or heard on the
 "subject) may still entertain, either on the justice or
 "the necessity of commencing this war in which we
 "are engaged, I entertain none on the present necessity and justice of continuing it. Under whatever
 "circumstances the war was begun, it is now become
 "just; since the enemy has refused to treat, on
 "equitable terms, for the restoration of peace."
 P. 11.

It requires the dexterity of no common casuist to decide after what concessions an insolent aggressor, a sanguinary combatant, and an implacable calumniator, may be permitted to pronounce his continued opposition to his adversary *just* and *necessary*: and I am sure it is a very arduous undertaking for that gigantic criminal to arbitrate and decide with rigorous impartiality in his own case. But, without much retrospective disputation, I most peremptorily deny, that a fair trial has been made of the disposition of the enemy; and I assert in the most unqualified language, and upon the immoveable assurance of human feeling, that no enemy whatsoever, similarly circumstanced with the French, could be expected to discover a conciliatory disposition towards the negotiators on the late occasion. Now this is a very principal and interesting topic, and well worthy a more minute examination, as involving most materially the main question of *justice* and *necessity*, as to the point under contemplation.

Let

Let us see then, without claiming any extraordinary powers of penetration to ourselves, whether it be not easy to suggest several strong presumptive arguments to evince, that ministers not only *were* not sincere, but in the nature of things, morally speaking, could not *possibly* be sincere, in their overtures for peace: and such arguments, as, I trust, will apply with irresistible cogency to plain uncorrupted understandings.

1. The acknowledged character of the two ministerial leaders, one in each house of Parliament, for every thing that is self-opinionated, arrogant, audacious, defamatory, and despotical, renders in them a sincere application for peace to men, whom they have incessantly holden up to universal detestation as the most horrible of monsters, all but an *actual impossibility*. Daily experience informs us with unerring satisfaction, that these furious and imperious natures, without some very strong countervailing interest, (but the interest of our corrupt and guilty ministers is *prolonged war*) are never changed: and we see in fact, from the late speeches of the ministry, no abatement of their virulence and animosity; whilst the French continue the same *regicides* and *atheists* as before. Implacable phrenzy, *regular government*, on one hand; indelible parricide, impious disorder, on the other;—can these unite, with cordiality and benevolent intention? I must insist upon it, that no man,

ὃ μὴ φρενας ἐζέλετο Ζεὺς,

found in his intellects, and possessing the slightest acquaintance with human manners, can think such an amicable association possible. Besides, is it to be endured, that our infatuation and intrigues shall force Holland into a crusade against her interest, deliver her up to an enraged enemy, and then from superabundant kindness strip her of all the means of restoration to prosperity, her foreign settlements, and retain them, truly! for our own indemnification and aggrandisement? France will deserve all the investives, which the untameable tongue of Lord Grenville has poured
upon

upon her, if she does not oppose such swindling perfidy at the risk even of her own existence.

2. The established conduct of these ministers constitutes an indubitable proof of their ill faith in this transaction; and a proof deduced also from the immutable operation of human passions. They have burthened the country with an immense overwhelming debt by an unexampled prodigality of the public money; they have reduced thousands and tens of thousands to wretchedness and beggary; they have occasioned a devastation of the human species infinitely tremendous beyond the most merciless tyrants of ancient or modern times; the death of a fellow-creature is no more to them, than the fall of an autumnal leaf in the pathless desert; land and sea is covered with the carcases of their slain:—they have engendered sham plots, false alarms, and visionary assassinations, for the purposes of deluding the unwary, and to establish their own power by a military despotism, in due time, over England, like that, which now tramples bleeding Ireland to the earth: they have persecuted unto death, they have exiled to the ends of the world, and they now imprison with inconceivable rigour, (I speak what I have seen and know) their fellow-citizens, for trivial and venial offences, against every principle of constitutional law, pure justice, and sound policy:—after a long course of these and other enormities, can such men, I ask, in an instant, become benevolent, pacific, haters of bloodshed, and lovers of their country?—Add not insult to our sufferings.

3. Again: to discard from view every other consideration, the ministers must have expected, that the French, whom they have regarded as *worse than brutes*, would prove themselves *more than men*, if they presumed on a cordial negociation on the part of the republic, with an adversary who had so reviled her, and to whom she justly referred, as their ultimate original, those unparalleled calamities, that had desolated her country with floods of slaughter. The ministry must have seen, for it was clear to the most superficial observa-

observation, that the French, if they possessed intellects one degree above fatuity, would be sensible, that no peace with the English government, as now conducted, could be liberal, substantial, permanent; or any thing more, than a mere disguised hostility, from an inability to execute it's purposes; ready to tear off the mask on the first convenient occasion, that should present itself. Who, I say, but ideots, could expect a candid and honest intercourse in such a negotiation on the part of the French republic? It were an outrage to human feeling and universal experience to pretend it.

4. The re-appointment of Lord Malmſbury to that negotiation was in itself a gross insult to the French nation; and, as such, an indubitable symptom of insincerity on the part of the English ministers. A detailed narrative of a private conversation, impressed with the clearest marks of exaggeration, management, and diplomatic artifice,

to make the worse appear
The better reason;

if it must not be stigmatized as a scandalous act of treachery, was at least so ungracious and indecorous a discovery of confidential communication, as could not fail to render that nobleman peculiarly obnoxious to his opponents, and indeed must necessarily excite suspicions in every calm observer, extremely disreputable to the good faith of his employers.

5. The tyrannical temper and the violent measures of the present administration, exemplified by a transgression of the liberal policy of our ancestors and the confessed principles of constitutional freedom in such numerous and momentous instances, form so great a contrast to the free energies of republican equality, as will not allow *me* to suppose for a single moment, that Mr. Pitt and his colleagues entertained a sincere wish of a hearty reconciliation and friendly intercourse with the French government. They must be sensible, how such a commerce, sooner or later, must dissolve an usurpation of power in which they have fenced
B them-

themselves by a copious manufacture of their staple commodity, posts and peerages; by a diffusion of corrupt humours through every vein of the body politic, even to the evanescent ramifications of it's capillary vessels; and by a prostitute majority of borough-mongers, loan-jobbers, military officers, pensioners, and official sycophants, in the lower house. Nay, through such an amplitude of circumference is their vicious and contaminating influence now propagated in every direction, that their power is irresistible throughout the country, notwithstanding all their miscarriages and misconduct; notwithstanding their palpable inability, and the acknowledged inefficacy of their measures: for I almost question, whether a dozen men, at all distinguished for intellect, and virtue, and political disquisition, who are at this hour the advocates of the present ministry, can be found in Britain,

From old Belerium to the northern main,

not connected, in fact or expectancy, by themselves or their relatives, with some, who depend on the emoluments of the established system; as churchmen, officers in the army or navy, contractors, money-lenders, lawyers, or civil placemen. Is it for such a crew to wish and promote a pacific communication with the French republic? The sentiments of Achilles to Hector must necessarily be the sentiments of such governments to each other:

Detested as thou art, and ought to be,
Nor oath, nor pact, Achilles plights with thee;
Such pacts as lambs and rabid wolves combine,
Such leagues as men and furious lions join,
To such I call the gods! one constant state
Of lasting rancour and eternal hate:
No thought but rage, and never-ceasing strife,
Till death extinguish rage, and thought, and life.

POPE'S Iliad, xxii, 335.

6. Lastly, that recovery from so profound a stupefaction, which an intercourse with France, in union with a reflection on the miseries of an unnecessary, ruinous, and fruitless war, in addition to that dreadful disclosure of the real state of our finances, must indubitably

bitably effect on every rank of people in this country, makes a continuance of the present ministers in office, after a general pacification, the highest improbability imaginable. That gigantic monster of ministerial depravity, who has stalked abroad with such effrontery, and insolently defied the loud blusterings of martial conflict, will be certainly divested of his cloak by the gentle, but searching, energies of peace. How then can they be supposed desirous to accelerate that period, when they shall be despoiled of their power, and left naked to popular indignation, after so long and unbridled a career of wickedness, and such a multitude of enormous crimes? Fallen arrogance excites no compassion: discarded favourites have no friend:

Where'er they turn, they meet a stranger's eye:
Their supplants scorn them, and their followers fly.

So just and necessary is this war!

"And, were there even a bridge over the channel,
"France durst not make an incursion with half her
"numbers. She knows how ready her neighbours
"would be to revenge the injuries they have sustained,
"—how ready her own citizens would be to regain
"the blessings they have lost, could they once see all
"her forces occupied in a distant country." P. 13.

If this feat were indeed accomplished,

—— and the mole immense wrought on
Over the foaming deep high-arch'd, a bridge
Of length prodigious;

the most sanguine wishes of the republicans would be gratified. The solicitude, I trow, of Buonaparte and his columns (unrivalled captain! unconquerable heroes!) does not turn upon "what numbers we should oppose against him," but "how he can get at us." No great expectation will be formed of English prowess on it's own ground, with all our swaggering pretensions, by those who recollect the adventures of about 9000 ragamuffin breechless loons from Scotland, but a few years ago. Though the Bishop of Landaff will prove, I doubt not, a second Ulysses at the least, too many of us, I fear, will, alas! resemble the Satyrs in

Euripides, who had made loud and boastful profession of their readiness to assist the hero in burning the eye of Polyphemus, but miserably failed in the performance of their engagement, when the hour of experiment was come. "Do but see," says one, (*a city light horseman*) "what a long way I am off! It is impossible for me to reach him."—"Oh; what a sudden lameness has seized my poor leg!" says another (*a supplementary militia-man*): "Aye! and mine too!" says a third (*a voluntary cavalier*): "A most unaccountable spasm began to contract my feet, just as I was ready."—"And these eyes of mine," exclaims another (*a provincial associator*), "are full of ashes, from some inexplicable cause or other."—"The truth is," said a fifth (*a life-and-fortune man*), "it is a generous compassion for our bones that suggests these excuses; but I am acquainted with a charm of Orpheus, a most admirable specific! which will teach the brand how to march at once of its own accord, and put out his eye!"

In short, this gay flourish of the spirited Bishop reminds one of a similar bravado from that most redoubtable and peerless captain, hight Lord Hawkbury;

(— αἰσχυρεσθ', ἄρα καὶ πελαγῇ.

Ye little stars, hide your diminished rays;)

and of his *march to Paris*: and I partly believe, one would be as completely realised as the other. That we have ever been an over-match for the French, is ascribable solely to a *better government*: but great indeed must that interval be, which most rapid advances in this direction, and a lamentable retrogression in that, will not quickly render evanescent.

But, however this may terminate, I consider that insinuation of the domineering terrors of the French army, and a secret willingness in a considerable part of the French nation, but for this restraint, *to return to their vomit*, and restore royalty, as a vision "through the ivory gate," a notion perfectly unsubstantial, contradicted alike by the testimony of travellers, and undif-

undisputed fact. It is most notorious, that the armies of France have been the most strenuous and invariable supporters of republicanism throughout the conflict. Now these armies were not, like our's, a collection of the vagabonds and outcasts of society, mere profligate mercenaries (the common men, I mean), but a selection from all orders of citizens by a rigorous requisition; and of course may be regarded as an adequate and fair representative of the whole community. What then, I ask, should have hindered *them* from reinstating monarchy, had they been so perversely inclined? But nothing less was in the contemplation of these true patriots :

————— quæ belua ruptis,
Cum semel effugit, reddit se prava catenis ?

“ But if I were asked whether an equal number of Englishmen would beat these conquerors of Italy, I would answer, as an English ambassador answered a king of Prussia, when, at a review of his forces, he asked the ambassador ‘ whether he thought that an equal number of Englishmen could beat his Prussians.’—‘ I cannot tell (replied the ambassador) whether an equal number would beat them; but I am certain half the number would try.” P. 15.

The Austrian squadrons and Hungarian infantry, with whose martial character the finest troops of Britain (not your *supplementary militia* and *volunteer cavalry*), in the opinion of those troops themselves at the siege of Valenciennes, could venture no comparison; they, I say, would peruse, beyond all controversy, this extravagance of national vanity with a smile of ineffable contempt:—how much more their conquerors? Personal courage is not wholly constitutional; but is a compound of native energy and habit, invigorated by a consciousness of superior skill and glorious exploits. But in these respects what nation can be put in competition with the French, whether of modern fame, or of ancient story?

“ Many honest men, I am sensible, have been alarmed into a belief, that were the French to invade this country, they would be joined by great

"numbers of discontented men. This is not my opinion." PP. 16—17.

On the contrary, I am fully satisfied, that, if the French could land a considerable army in this country, to the number, suppose, of 60,000 or 70,000 men (which, nevertheless, appears to me utterly impracticable, with our present naval superiority) the kingdom would be lost for ever. The same cause, which has facilitated the progress of the republicans on the continent, would operate as powerfully for them in this country also: namely, a degree of poverty and wretchedness in the lower orders of the community, which, especially in their present state of depravity and ignorance, will render the chances, even from confusion, of any change desirable. I believe from my soul, that within three miles of the house, where I am writing these pages, there is a much greater number of starving, miserable human beings, the hopeless victims of penury and distress, than on any equal portion of ground through the habitable globe. A fable of our old friend Æsop is extremely apposite on this occasion; which I shall present to the reader in the ample stile of Croxall:

Plain truth, dear Murray! needs no flowers of speech;
So take it in the very words of Creech.

THE SENSIBLE ASS.

An old fellow was feeding an ass in a fine green meadow; and, being alarmed with the sudden approach of the enemy, was impatient with the ass to put himself forward, and fly with all the speed that he was able. The ass asked him, Whether or no he thought the enemy would clap two pair of panniers upon his back? The man said, No; there was no fear of that. Why then, says the ass, I will not stir an inch: for what is it to me, who my master is, since I shall but carry my panniers, as usual?

The Application.

This fable shews us, how much in the wrong the poorer sort of people most commonly are, when they are under any concern about the revolutions of a govern-

government. All the alteration, which they can feel, is, perhaps, in the name of their sovereign, or some such important trifle; but they cannot well be poorer, or made to work harder than they did before.

Thus far Dr. Croxall!

“ Does it follow that there ought to be no distinction in society, with respect to rank or riches, because there are none in a state of nature?” P. 37.

It follows, I think, most unquestionably, that no distinctions in society should prevail, but what arise from personal merit and public services. That the father's honours, which have been justly paid him, should be regularly transmitted, in connection with various privileges and immunities, to his undeserving children, is a stupidity, I should think, which few will be forward to defend. But so circumstanced are the aristocratical dignities of this country! Something, alas! besides *Virtue*, is *Nobility* in England. An advocate for inequality like this shall receive no commendations at my hands. He deserves well neither of Humanity nor the Gospel.

To the remarks of the Bishop on the subject of *religion*, I beg leave, in the main, to subscribe my testimony of concurrence and approbation, as far as they are explicit. On this subject he is more himself; and speaks with that perspicuity and frankness, which characterise all his writings. As to an ecclesiastical establishment in alliance with the state, or rather dependent on it, I consider such a confederacy as a monstrous solecism in Christian polity;—as a fraudulent usurpation over that “liberty, with which Christ has made us free:”—as an impious prostitution of the simplicity and sincerity of the Gospel, a scheme of universal philanthropy and freedom, to secular and interested purposes;—in short, as the prominent characteristic of that antichristian tyranny, which is now ripe for summary vengeance and eternal extirpation. I regard (to use *great plainness of speech*) your Archbishops, Bishops, Deans, Canons, Prebendaries, and all the muster-roll of ecclesiastical aristocracy, as the despicable trumpery of priestcraft and superstition,
nd

and a grievous domination over the meek principles of evangelical sobriety : but I am utterly incapable, as God is my witness ! of the least disaffection to the persons of these churchmen, or of the slightest wish to injure them, because their opinions are not consonant to mine. All I want, is a reciprocal indulgence to my person and persuasions : an indulgence which is seldom shewn. This I know : a plentiful harvest of unbelievers will continue to be reaped, whilst Christianity is so taught, so practised, and so believed. I should entertain far better hopes of leading a French infidel to accept the pure religion of the scriptures, than a bigotted, superstitious Churchman. One is indeed much nearer to the truth ; than is the other. Conviction may be produced in less time, than prejudices can be untaught, and evil conceptions eradicated from the understanding ; which would then be in the situation only, after all, of an ingenuous infidel, who had enjoyed no opportunities of contemplating the revelation of Jesus in her native beauty. I prefer neutrality to prepossession, docility to conceit. The task of *unlearning* is much more arduous than that of *direct instruction*. Timotheus, a most eminent performer on the flute, contemporary with Philip and Alexander, was accustomed, we are told, (Quintil. Inst. ii. 3. ed. Burm.) to require a *double price* from those pupils, who had been disciplined by a former master. Men, who receive emoluments under a church establishment, may be as sincere believers as they please ; but they have no right to demand from others an acceptance of their own conviction as disinterested and independent testimony. Reason resists their plea. The nature of things is not to be changed or reversed for *their* credit and accommodation : and the good sense of mankind will demur at an appeal to such advocates of revelation to the end of time. *Thou shalt take no gift ; for a gift blindeth the eyes of the wise, and perverteth the words of the righteous.*

“ I am not altogether insensible of the danger I
 “ may have incurred, (should matters come to extre-
 “ mity) by thus publicly addressing my countrymen.

“ I might

" I might have concealed my sentiments, and waited
 " in retirement, till the struggle had been over, and
 " the issue known; but I disdain safety accompanied
 " with dishonour. When Hannibal is at the gates,
 " who but a poltroon would listen to the timid coun-
 " sels of neutrality, or attempt to screen himself from
 " the calamity coming on his country, by skulking as
 " a vagabond amid the mountains of Wales or of
 " Westmoreland? I am ready, and I am persuaded
 " that I entertain a just confidence in saying, that hun-
 " dreds of thousands of loyal and honest men are as
 " ready as I am, to hazard every thing in defence of
 " the country." PP. 41—42.

On a subject of this kind, a man can only undertake to answer for himself; and I feel no difficulty in saying for *myself*, that I am not one of these " hundreds of thousands" so very loyal and so very honest, as the Bishop of Landaff. My life and my books are all the personalities, that I value; and neither of them (for I have not tasted *lotus*) shall be hazarded in defence of the present administration. If the French come, they shall find me at my post, a watchful centinel in my proper box, MY STUDY, among the venerable dead: sometimes investigating the origin of man and primæval history, by turning the dark lantern of heathen records, or trimming the everlasting lamp of Moses; sometimes musing with the divine professors of the tuneful art, on subjects of taste and fancy; and sometimes meditating with the men of Galilee on mortality and immortality. No systems of " the many made for one," no zeal in support of frontless corruption and " every evil work," shall dip my hands in the blood of MEN!

Non res Romanæ, perituraque regna—.

Let those, who have an interest in these fooleries and sins; let those, who have brought us to this most alarming crisis,—step forwards in the day of danger, and fight the battles of their Baal and their Mammon: let these, I say, buckle on their panoply in defence of monarchy against republicanism, and stand up for domestic

mestic robbers against a foreign spoiler. We, *sons of peace*, or see, or think we see, a gleam of glory through the mist, which now envelopes our horizon. Great revolutions are accomplishing: a general fermentation is working for the purpose of general refinement through the universe:

—— incipiunt magni procedere menses.

We will wait the event, “through evil report and “good report,” in defiance of penalties and pains, of persecutions, imprisonments, and deaths; with trembling hope, but with a firm and tranquil resignation. *Know now, whether this be thy son's coat, or not.* A minister and believer of the gospel should be well assured of the rectitude of his cause, before he becomes crusader under the pretended banners of *order* and *religion*. If I saw a government, whether monarchical or republican, devoted solely to the moral and intellectual melioration of it's subjects, steadily and systematically bent on the promotion of their temporal comfort and accommodation by beneficent and equal laws; that government should find me as zealous and uniform in it's support, as the most forward of it's champions: but, when I see all consideration of the public welfare swallowed up in a domineering profligacy, venality, and selfishness; when I behold the most hideous crimes daringly perpetrated under the pretence of preserving regularity and subordination; when I see Religion employed as a state engine of despotism and murder, by a set of men who are worse than heathens and infidels in their lives:—when I observe these, and other enormities, which the time would fail me to enumerate, committed without scruple and without remorse, to maintain, forsooth! a degenerate constitution of ideal excellence and practical depravity, and am called upon to defend it against invaders; I revolt at such an audacious imposition, and pity the understanding that can be duped by such despicable artifice. I know the difference between Christianity and secularity—between vice and virtue—between public blessings and national calamities

ties—between speculation and patriotism—between freedom and coercion—between simple uncostly justice and ruinous law-chicanery—between liberal religion and a venal creed—between fancies and realities,—as well as the generality of my superiours in rank and station.

I have now animadverted, as far as I thought sufficient, but with studied lenity and a perpetual representation of my feelings from a consideration of the distinguished character whom I oppose, on some exceptionable positions of a very exceptionable publication, eminently adapted to confirm and quicken in their insane career the most pestilential ministry ever commissioned by the wrath of Heaven to sink a great, but guilty, nation in the gulph of disgrace and misery. I wish our author had rather found himself impelled by the pacific dictates of our religion to breathe the notes of suppression and retreat to these wild incendiaries, than sound the clarion of hostility and perseverance. Surely lenitives, not stimulants, were the proper application to their state of irritability and inflammation: surely their impetuosity demanded the bridle of Theopompus to restrain, not the goad of Ephorus to impel. But the Bishop himself must look to this. He will neither stand, nor fall, by my sentence. Before I conclude, however, let me be permitted to submit an expedient, which appears to my mind much more rational in itself, than the propositions suggested in his pamphlet; and not less in unison, I think, with the mild spirit and explicit dictates of the founder of our faith.

If the French republic should continue firm and faithful to itself, there exists not, I believe, a thinking man in these kingdoms, who can persuade himself of a possible redemption to this country, on a supposition of a much longer continuance of the war. Now this war is hopeless; for in what quarter are the French vulnerable by us? And the enormity of our expenditure from a perpetual state of complete preparation to resist the menaced invasion, that I may omit to mention a boundless prodigality throughout every department

partment of public office, is daily operating with aggravated and resistless pressure. Is it not fatuity then, is it not madness, for the nation at large to acquiesce in measures, which absolutely leave our destruction in the power of our enemies, without the necessity of landing a single soldier on our coasts? And who are benefited by this frantic procedure, but a few greedy, obstinate, baffled, tyrannical, and sanguinary men in office; the scourge of this nation, and the contempt of Europe?

"But the animosity of the French is implacable. They are immovably determined on our destruction. They will make peace on no conditions, which ought to be accepted by Great Britain."—All this I absolutely deny, by maintaining, that no proper experiment has been made; and no man can put in his claim to demand belief from me to a mere assertion without proof. You have indeed solicited a negotiation; but through the medium of men, whom it is **NOT POSSIBLE** for the French to think sincere, or to regard as friends. Change your ministry, restore your constitution, correct your abuses, and calm your spirit; then (and surely they, who have been successful in their predictions through all this conflict, have more reason to expect attention to their opinions, than those who have been invariably wrong;) then, I say, solicit peace; and, take my word for it, the French republic, so far from insisting on any concessions of humiliation and disgrace, will come forwards to embrace you, will eagerly accept your friendship, and be proud of a connection with the first people in the universe. Should I be mistaken in this event, and have formed a wrong judgement of their temper and designs, still the good effect of this advice will be an inestimable acquisition—a vigorous and generous **UNANIMITY** among ourselves. But, untill this alternative has been adopted, untill this experiment has been made, I must insist, that the pertinacious asseveration of the impracticability of peace is a proof of intolerable, shameless impudence; a mere stratagem of interest and imposture: I must insist, that the continuance

nuance of war is a desperate profligacy in the ministers, and a ruinous infatuation in the people; and that all incentive to the prolongation of this monstrous work of desolation calamity, and blood, is **BOLD IMPIETY**. In short, the circumstances of the time most imperiously demand the interference of **THAT MAN**, who, for diffusive political wisdom, gentleness of nature, and genuine philanthropy, unalloyed by a single particle of bitterness, animosity, or resentment, has not, and, perhaps, never had, a superiour among his species: A **MAN**, as preferable to your *vital Christianity* politicians, as solid actions to empty sounds, as the substance of Virtue to her shadow. "Consider of it, take advice, and speak your minds." My sentiments are before you,

Inde etenim nobis, nec fas aliunde, redibunt

Vitales fortasse animæ, lucisque prioris

Usura **ÆTERNAS NE DEVOLVAMUR AD UMBRAS**

*Hackney,
January 30th, 1798.*

THE END.